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Mäskäräm 1	August 7	Heavy rains; fishing easy in muddy, turbulent rivers.	Some sow a bit of tyff and "Adja" barley, to have it late in harvest. Cattle taken to upland.	7th: Trinity ("Selassye"); parade, despite rain, with "tabot". 13th: Transfiguration of Jesus ("Buhe", "Debrä Tabor") feast, with torch-light parade.	13th: mock battles with whips ("jeraf") fought by young men in afternoon, between hamlets and individuals. Younger children badger adults for gifts in morning.	7th: Pictures of Emp. H.S. carried in parade, because Trinity is his name-sake; flags, etc.
to	to					
Mäskäräm 30	Sept. 5					
Pagumeal	Sept. 6	Rains broken by occasional sunshine.	End of tradit. fiscal year: "Mägadres" had to account to the feudal lord for dues he had collected from merchants.	3rd: Feast of St. Raphael, the water saint, bathing in his holy water. 5th: Eve of feast of St. John: bury "lefafa sedeq", scroll; bathe.	3rd: Examination of boys in church school to decide who will be deacons; so some use drugs as stimulant. Younger children collect peas for good harvests in new year.	
2	7					
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789 where the thief had slept, until he was caught.
694 The thiefcatcher directed this procedure, but did not drug himself. For that puppose he selected a boy about the age of a deacon, i.e. 10 to 15, for it was believed that puberty spoiled the sensitivity and "unblemished innocence" of the boy. This boy was never taught the secret of his power. Often he was a young slave (more recently ex-slave), who had been selected on account of his particular suggestibility. It was be- [276] lieved that years of this repeated drugging made him a permanent addict, slowed his mental functions and even sent him occasionally into raving fits; so that a person who had served as "tracer" for the lebashay could not be a witness in court.

When complaint of a theft reached the lebashay from within his "territory", he went to the cheqa shum or other local administrative official, and asked permission to begin his investigation. Together, they as well as the local "atbiya danya" judge and witnesses (if it was grand larceny) went to the place where the crime had been committed. The boy, young enough never to have had manly sexual intercourse with a woman, was now given the drug to drink. The lebashay tied the boy's waist with a girdle, leaving 3 to 4 yards hanging down, (to be used later to maintain control like a chain in curbing a dog).

The boy was now given a hornful of milk to drink, in which a black powder from the medicine bag had been dissolved. It did not take long before the boy began

793 Parish priests, (unlike mämhër scholars) are also
[66] not bashful about demanding their due (produce tithe, sheep, honey, even cash) from their tenants of church land. Sardonic peasant humor expresses this in the proverb:

[539] "The bashful priest,
the blind donkey,
(are one)" . (i.e. both would be helpless and starve to death).

532 Among artisans who do specialist work for the
346 church is the artist of church paintings, usually highly colorful and realistic scenes from the suffering of the saints, in morbid and gory detail; the beauties of heaven and the trinity; the horrors of hell ruled by a chained, soul-munching Satan; etc. These religious and semi-religious story illustrations and legends are painted on canvas and then attached to the inside of church walls.

874 Church students are usually boys 10 years or over (never girls), who at first learn the Geez-Amharic alphabet, reading Geez without translating, beginning with the Epistle of the Apostle John. They are taught by rote, memorizing by chanting the portions out loud. There is very little writing in the early grades, and experimentation is traditionally discouraged, for fear that the boys might use their new-won learning to write magic amulets. Before examinations, church studetns stimulate
874 their mental processes by eating the leaf of a Datura
●276 weed resembling Jimson weed called "astänaqer" (lit. to stimulate talk) which is also used by däbtära in exor-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

874 [276] cising the bewitched, and which seems to have an effect similar to benzedrine.

Examinations include fluency in reading Geez and in reciting by heart Gospels, Lives of Saints, and Ethics ("sirak"), the last particularly in the upper grades. In still higher grades they learn devotional poetry ("qene"), including composition, and "zäma", church liturgical music in correct tones and notes.

874 792 For more advanced study, the boys interested in a career in the church have to go to monastery schools. At the old and famous Amhara monastery of Dabra Libanos the number of students may reach 500 at any given time. They earn their keep by serving the monks, begging in the vicinity, and eating as much as they can when a noble family arrives to give a memorial feast, "tazkar", in honor of a departed soul. Often the students do not possess a good shamma, and therefore have adopted the ancient clothing of sheepskins over their rags, to keep themselves warm and to be identified more easily when they go begging. Begging, they carry a small basket on the left arm and, leaning on a maqomya stick with the right, chant ecstatic church melodies until the housewives fill the baskets with enjara or parched barley ("qolo").

Those who serve the monks, carrying water, washing their clothes, carrying their food, water, etc., receive part of the monk's daily ration("dergo"). The 874 students usually graduate by age 18 to 20, and then decide whether to take monastic vows or return home to

273 police officers. The visiting peasants, who have just sold the harvest, stick to mead, which, for their taste, is alcoholic enough and expensive enough.

The person who pays for a round of drinks is loudly lauded as "elephant", king of African animals. The "tāj bēt" is usually the gayest place in town, well-lit, open until very late at night, equipped with nimble waitresses who, contrary to the usual pattern of female behavior, lightly flirt with the customers, in a semi-childish (therefore subordinate) way.

273 177 In recent years, exposure to European alcoholic beverages in the cities had led to attempts to replace thehoney used in "taj" with cheaper sugar, and to add other ingredients to raise the alcoholic content. This is done in many mead-houses in Addis Ababa, but is rejected by the traditional conoisseur, especially in provincial towns like Gondar. Even in the city this is regarded as dangerous, for no one knows just what the experimenter may have added. One common police case is the adding of gasoline to city barley-beer or mead, which competitors sometimes have placed into the competitor's brew so as to ruin her business. An early effect of the exposure to European alcoholic beverages was reported humorously in the 1920's, when the private brewer of the powerful provincial lord Ras Hailu of Gojjam attempted to champagnize the traditional mead (footnote 99).

276 Consumption of tobacco ("tembaho"), which is called "drinking tobacco" if smoked, is still regarded as forbidden by the Abyssinian Coptic clergy, and is therefore rare among Amhara, except for those modern-educated individuals who have been abroad. The latter smoke cigarettes turned out by Ethiopian government monopoly in Addis Ababa.

Footnote 99 - Griaule, M.: D'un Mode Aberrant de Conservation de l'Hydromel au Godjam. Journal de la Societe des Africanistes, IV, Fasc 2, pp. 278-284, Paris, 1934.

276 The Muslims, who smoke freely, even in the provincial towns, especially in the Arab or Muslim-operated teahouses, follow a variety of ways of consuming tobacco. Some use a brown snuff tobacco, "senqan" or "surat"; a few even chew "chat", a stimulant drug chewed in the original leaf, which is far more common in southern Ethiopia. This is held in low prestige by the Amhara, who associate the consumption of traditional tobacco and chat with the customs of Shanqalla and Sudanese ex-slaves. In the 1870's the fanatically orthodox Emperor John, who later died fighting the invading Muslem Mahdi, even forbade the raising of tobacco, but since then it is grown again in small patches in and near towns.

517 The high point of traditional entertainment and recreation is still the traditional feast, the "deges" (or "gebber"), featuring special material enjoyments such as raw beef and fermented honeymead; and such emotional enjoyments as watching azmari performers do their shoulder dance, their high-pitched song-chants, to traditional musical accompaniment; and, perhaps, receiving a "gursha" from the "great man" (telleq säw). On less intense occasions, picnics in the countryside and recreational promenading ("shersher"), are still the major forms of adult recreation in the long dry season.

275 Not only shame, but also fear, keep many peasants and townsmen out of the "täj-bÿet". Many a peasant, intending merely to take one drink, stays until after dark, then, fearing robbery on his way home or the sharp tongue of his wife, succumbs to the "consolation" of the waitresses; and wakes up the next morning without any of his harvest money. Therefore, travellers prefer to lodge with an "unattached woman", whom they may encounter at a beer-house (tälla bÿet) and who will serve as temporary wife.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

wrapped round the portion of other foodstuff to be eaten, and the whole put bodily into the mouth.

I happened on one occasion to call on an Abyssinian chieftain, a ruler of a distant province who was visiting Addis and who was a particular friend of mine, just as he was sitting down to a late lunch in his *tukul* surrounded by his principal vassal chiefs. I had to sit down on the divan next to him; and as he was of course eating *à l'Abyssine* his cook kept on rolling up succulent morsels of terrifically hot curry or stewed meat or raw flesh in bread with his fingers, and pressing them on my jaded palate. Any of his chiefs whom he desired to honour was similarly distinguished, that is to say, he would select a tit-bit, give it to the cook who doctored it up and passed it to a slave, who conveyed it to the fortunate recipient, who ate it with great gusto. And fingers all round all the time!

Except for some few individuals who have acquired the habit in Europe or from Europeans, smoking, curiously enough, is practically non-existent among Abyssinians although the tobacco plant grows freely, and the Gallas make a sort of rough coarse tobacco which is possible, though hardly pleasant. The practice was somewhat drastically discouraged by the late Emperor Johannes (Theodore's successor), who is said to have punished smoking by cutting off the offender's lips, and snuffing by removing his nose. I was unsuccessful in ascertaining the cause of their objection to smoking, one of the various obviously inadequate reasons being that the use of tobacco was condemned because the plant was supposed to have grown originally out of the tomb of the heretic Arius! A more probable explanation is that the practice was regarded as a

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

276 Moslem one and was accordingly originally condemned by the Church.

273 On the other hand they make up for this privation by a pretty free indulgence in their own home-made hydromel (*tej*), beer (*talla*), and spirits (*araki*), and also in fearsome alcoholic preparations distilled by some of the small Greek traders in Addis.

Tej, their principal drink, is home-made by nearly every family; this is manufactured from honey, which is to be found in great quantities in most parts of Abyssinia, and is fermented by means of an evergreen plant called *guecho* or *geshu*. When well made and matured it is a very pleasant beverage; to the native it is an intoxicant, and during the feast days one meets many who have partaken well but not too wisely of it.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

Poetry stands as the most appreciated of all traditional forms of expression, and nearly two-thirds of the secondary and half the college students state that they compose Amharic verse themselves, on occasions ranging from public celebrations to private moments of great joy or sorrow. This is as might be expected in view of the tremendous importance of poetry in traditional Amhara culture (see chapters vi and vii). Painting, on the other hand, has played a rather inconspicuous part in Abyssinia. (Its genuine achievement in the high culture, the often remarkable Ethiopian miniatures, is frequently repudiated by modernizing Ethiopians for being too "backward.") Those students who do prefer Ethiopian-style paintings explain their preference on the grounds that they find them more intelligible and closer to Ethiopian life, and stress their value as reminders of Ethiopia's past.[26] The majority who prefer European-style paintings offer primarily mechanical reasons; they find them more "efficient," "systematic," and "accurate"—more "up-to-date."

In response to a question on their favorite type of foreign music, the students gave a wide variety of answers, ranging from "Oriental" and "religious" to "Rose, Rose, I Love You" and "Mozart." By far the most frequently mentioned musical preference was "classical" (20 per cent). This was followed by approximately equal percentages of preference for American popular songs; jazz and swing; rock 'n' roll; and Sudanese music. Of foreign dances, the most popular are the waltz and the tango (17 per cent each), followed at some distance by rock 'n roll, cha cha cha, and jitterbug. In their movie preferences, finally, historical (17 per cent) and educational (12 per cent) films are the favorites, followed by war, detective, and adventure films.

One other area of consumption should be discussed in this context: the use of cigarettes. To the tradition-minded Amhara smoking symbolizes all that is objectionable in Western culture, while to some of the modern adolescents it symbolizes the excitement and "life" of modernity. The number of these latter is not really very high, at least not among those still in school; but it is noteworthy that emphatic rejection of smoking by most of the students is based primarily on the rationalistic arguments that it is injurious to health and wastes money, rather than on the traditional argument that it is sinful and counter to Christian custom. The most violent reactions of any, however, were aroused by the question: "How do you feel about women smoking?" In the secondary school sample to which this question was posed, disapproval was practically unanimous, and the comments included "makes me ashamed," "it is scaring," "I could choke her to death," and "worse than hell itself."

A few minor differences in taste appear in connection with differences in sex and school attended. The female students in our secondary school sample show a greater partiality to native foods than do the males, and, on the other hand, greater interest in Western music and dance. Peculiarities in the sub-

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

cultures of different schools account for a few other minor variations. Thus, for example, preference for Scottish dance is expressed chiefly among students of a school run by a British staff; the only kind of foreign music preferred by students of the Theological School is Sudanese music, that is, the kind most similar to Ethiopian music; and the University College, most urbane of the Ethiopian schools, is the only one where a majority of respondents indicated that they enjoy smoking.

Of all the differences, the most conspicuous is that between the secondary

TABLE 10

AESTHETIC PREFERENCES OF STUDENTS

Area of Consumption	Percentage of Students Who			Number
	Prefer "Traditional" or "Ethiopian" Forms	Prefer "European" or "Foreign" Forms	Indicate No Preference	
Dress for women	85	15	0	(700)
Food	80	16	4	(700)
Cigarettes*	71	10	19	(700)
Dress on holidays	70	26	4	(700)
Poetry	67	26	7	(700)
Music	62	35	3	(700)
Manner of eating†	40	58	2	(700)
Dance	38	56	6	(700)
Drink	24	56	20	(700)
Painting	23	67	10	(700)

* "Like to smoke" versus "do not like to smoke."

† Combines responses on "*gursha*" and eating in common or at individual places, which were practically identical.

school students and the college students. For in each of the areas discussed above in which traditional or Ethiopian patterns were set alongside European or foreign patterns, *the move from the secondary level to college level was accompanied by a decrease in preference for traditional patterns.*

If now we overlook these differences and calculate the total response, we obtain the profile shown in Table 10, which provides some idea of the range of variation in the students' taste with regard to items from Ethiopian and foreign cultures.

Morals.—The moral values reinforced during traditional Amhara adolescence are by no means rejected during modern Ethiopian adolescence, but their significance is somewhat attenuated due to the new conditions of life in

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

155 gratifications are not enjoyed wholly without conflict. In actuality, traits which reflect anxiety about the prospect of oral gratification are no less conspicuous in Amhara culture than the phenomena we have just been discussing.

155 262 Negative attitudes regarding oral gratification appear, first of all, in the scope and variety of the restrictions placed on eating. From both their Judaic and their Christian traditions the Abyssinians have taken over nearly every restriction on eating available. The chief exception to this is the Judaic injunction against eating blood, which Abyssinian custom permits. But they have retained intact the Semitic ban on unclean animals—those which lack a split hoof, upper teeth, or do not chew the cud. Their dread of pork is so strong that to some extent they feel closer to Muslims, who also avoid pork, than to Western Christians.

155 785 They have likewise retained and elaborated on the norms concerning fasting found in early Christianity. With respect to the number and harshness of the fasts it prescribes, Amhara-Tigre custom is probably the strictest in the world. In the rigor of its fasting laws the Ethiopian Church surpasses its sister religions of Eastern Orthodoxy—the Coptic, Syrian, Armenian, and Indian Orthodox Churches. On fasting days no food or drink is to be tasted before early afternoon. Thereafter, no sort of meat, fowl, milk, or eggs may be eaten, which reduces the Amhara's post meridiem diet on fasting days to grains and pulse.

Such fasting days occur on every Wednesday and Friday of the year, except those which come during the eight weeks after Easter. There are, in addition, many special fasts in the course of the year. Some of these, like the month-long fast before Pentecost and the two months prior to Christmas, are observed only by clergy and elders. Others must be observed by everyone, though children are led into them gradually. These universal fasts include the eight weeks before Easter, plus a three-day fast during the week before Lent; two days before Christmas; and sixteen days preceding the festival of the Assumption of Mary in August. Total abstinence is prescribed for a period of forty-eight hours before Easter. All together, the ordinary Amhara is supposed to fast 165 days each year; for the devout person the total approaches 250 days.

155 276 773 784 The taboo on the use of tobacco presents another area in which oral gratification is suppressed. Two myths are told to explain this taboo. One is that the tobacco plant originally grew out of the intestines of the heretic Arius. The other is that on the day of the Crucifixion all plants except tobacco withered and died. In any case, smoking is regarded as a grave sin among traditional Amhara, and one who has been suspected of using tobacco is not permitted to kiss the Cross.

121 784 785 155 One could argue that these taboos and fasting customs are simply cultural